

GENERAL EDUCATION
TRANSFER COMMITTEE

REPORT

April 1995

Kentucky Council on Higher Education

GENERAL EDUCATION TRANSFER COMMITTEE REPORT

Introduction

The General Education Transfer Committee was established in January 1994 to develop a policy to implement the recommendation concerning the transfer of general education courses presented in the *SJR 36 Final Report*. The *Final Report* was adopted by the Council on Higher Education and presented to the Joint Interim Committee on Education of the General Assembly in November 1993. The text of the *SJR 36 Final Report* recommendation addressed by the transfer committee is as follows:

- The Council on Higher Education and the institutions will develop a general education core transfer component which will reflect the distribution of discipline areas universally included in university-wide lower division general education requirements for the baccalaureate degree. Specific courses used to fulfill the requirement for each discipline will be those identified by each institution as meeting its own lower division general education requirements.

The general education recommendation in the *SJR 36 Final Report* was supported by several assumptions. This recommendation and its underlying assumptions provided the initial basis for the deliberations of the General Education Transfer Committee. The assumptions are repeated here to provide the context for the General Education Transfer Committee's work.

- That there is sufficient commonality in the lower division portion of the basic general education requirements currently offered among all universities to develop a common general education component, using the block transfer approach, which is portable across institutions.

- That each institution is willing to recognize the professional integrity of all other public institutions in the acceptance of the general education core transfer component.
- That the general education core transfer component will be similar, but not identical, to each institution's lower division general education requirements in that the transfer core will be composed of an array of discipline areas common to all institutions.
- That the specific courses comprising the general education core transfer component will be those identified by each university to fulfill its own university-wide lower division general education requirements in a discipline. Thus, the general education core transfer component will be similar to a university's existing general education requirements, but will not be identical in that the specific courses may differ.
- That each institution's general education requirements, including any upper division general education requirements, will not be affected by the adoption of a general education core transfer component, as meeting institutional requirements.
- That each institution is willing to accept the general education core transfer component.
- That the general education core transfer component will be accepted whether or not it is part of an associate degree;

General Education Transfer Concepts

In its initial organizational meeting, the General Education Transfer Committee reiterated its intent to address institution-wide lower division general education requirements for the baccalaureate degree as opposed to the general education requirements for specific majors. Institution-wide general education requirements apply to all baccalaureate students within a given institution and serve as the framework for determining specific general education courses in each baccalaureate major. For example, calculus and physics may be designated as fulfilling the general education requirements in mathematics and science for engineering majors; whereas, college algebra and general biology may fulfill these requirements for agriculture majors. As such, institution-wide lower division general education requirements will serve as the starting point for developing transfer programs for specific majors. It also was noted by the Committee that institution-wide general education requirements differ among institutions and that these differences provide opportunities as well as challenges in developing a workable and efficient transfer mechanism.

The General Education Transfer Committee reaffirmed the validity of the assumptions underlying the concept of a general education transfer component as presented in the *SIR 36 Final Report*. This reaffirmation resulted from thorough and deliberate discussions of several issues and principles affecting the transfer of courses in general, and the transfer of general education courses in particular. Several themes recurred throughout these discussions: the integrity of the sending institution's lower division general education requirements; the concept that competencies developed by general education programs are more important than individual courses; the liberal acceptance of general education courses by the receiving institution to meet its degree requirements; the autonomy of an institution

to develop its own general education program, including those aspects which make its program unique; and the concept of "whole to whole," i.e., block transfer. These themes are interrelated and reinforce each other when merged into a conceptual framework.

Recognition of the integrity and validity of the sending institution's institution-wide lower division general education requirements, and acceptance of these requirements as meeting the institution-wide lower division general education requirements for the baccalaureate degree at the receiving institution imply a reciprocity in which each institution is viewed as both a sending and receiving institution. Consequently, for an institution's general education program to be recognized and accepted by its peers, it must also be willing to recognize and accept the general education program of other institutions.

A parallel theme is that each institution has the autonomy to include areas of study which make its general education program unique. These apparently dichotomous views were reconciled by agreeing that the competencies developed in general education programs are of more importance than individual courses and by emphasizing the concept of "whole to whole." When similar competencies are developed through various general education programs and when these competencies are emphasized, it is then feasible to accept that the "whole" lower division general education program of the sending institution should meet the "whole" lower division general education requirements of the receiving institution. Acceptance of the "whole to whole" concept for the entire lower division general education program was framed in the context of an Associate in Arts or Associate in Science program designed for transfer. However, the concept of "whole to whole" can also be applied by the receiving institution when all

of the lower division general education requirements for a baccalaureate degree at the sending institution are completed even though an associate degree is not earned.

The concept of the AA/AS transfer program assumes a program of study in which there is a significant general education block. Two factors influenced the Committee in its decision to recommend acceptance of a block transfer approach to the general education courses. First, research on the success of students transferring from community colleges to universities indicates that students who complete an associate degree (AA/AS) or 60 or more credit hours in a transfer program perform as well as and are as likely to earn a bachelor's degree as native students. Second, it is anticipated that recognition of the AA/AS transfer program by receiving institutions would make that degree more valuable to students. When the Committee related the concept of "whole to whole" to the success of students who transfer with an associate transfer degree or completion of 60 or more credit hours, the principle of accepting AA/AS transfer programs as meeting institution-wide lower division general education requirements for the baccalaureate degree and of admitting AA/AS degree holders and completers of 60 or more credit hours as juniors at the receiving institution was strengthened.

While transferring with an AA/AS degree is preferable, the Committee also recognized that completion of blocks or categories of related coursework prior to transfer is preferable to transferring individual courses. In order to provide some incentive for students to complete categories of related coursework, the Committee decided to develop a General Education Transfer Component using the themes presented above. A detailed review of the current institution-wide lower division general education requirements revealed that there are five broad categories of instruction offered by all institutions even though they

are not identified as such at each institution. Thus, completion of the requisite number of credit hours in each category should serve as a guarantee to the student that the hours in each completed category will be counted by the receiving institution toward meeting its lower division course requirements in the same category. The General Education Transfer Component (5 categories = 33 hours) would permit each university to require transfer students who have not earned a degree or completed 60 or more qualifying hours to complete additional hours in any of the five categories or to require those areas of study which make the receiving institution's general education program unique. However, transfer students would not lose any hours and would not be required to take more hours to graduate than native students.

Council on Higher Education General Education Transfer Policy

This policy on the transfer of general education courses among the public institutions of higher education is intended to be the first in a series of policy statements on the transfer of credit in response to the recommendations presented in the *SIR 36 Final Report*. This policy incorporates the transfer principles developed by the General Education Transfer Committee.

Effective Date and Application of Policy

This policy on the transfer of general education courses will be effective for students transferring for the spring 1996 semester. A detailed implementation timeframe is included in this policy.

The General Education Transfer Policy applies to students who transfer from one public higher education institution to another public higher education institution with the intention of completing their

educational program at the receiving institution. This policy is not applicable to credits earned as a transient (visiting) student. Students who intend to transfer credits back to their home (degree-granting) institution must receive prior written approval from their advisor at the home institution.

To be eligible for inclusion under this policy, a student must at the time of transfer have an overall grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.0 (on 4.0 scale) on all work attempted in accordance with the sending institution's policy for computing GPAs; however, since transfer policies differ from institution to institution, a "D" grade may or may not transfer depending on the transfer policy of the receiving institution.

Definitions

Lower division general education requirements are usually fulfilled by taking designated lower division courses, but they also may be fulfilled by taking upper division courses as designated by the institution.

A transient student is a student in good standing in any recognized institution who is enrolled in another institution for credit with the intent to transfer these credits to the student's home institution.

Upper division general education requirements can only be fulfilled by taking the upper division courses designated by the institution.

Scope of Policy

While this policy addresses and resolves the transferability of institution-wide lower division general education requirements, i.e., requirements that apply to all students regardless of major, it is not possible to address all general education course requirements that students may encounter. For example, the general education requirements

for business majors in some cases differ from those for science majors.

Transfer of Associate in Arts or Associate in Science Degrees or Equivalent

- (1) Students are encouraged to complete an Associate in Arts (AA) or Associate in Science (AS) transfer program prior to transfer. Universities will recognize the completion of an approved AA/AS transfer degree by admitting students to junior standing and accepting the general education credits as meeting institution-wide lower division general education requirements. AA and AS transfer degrees, recognized for this purpose, whether offered by community colleges or universities must contain a minimum of 48 hours of lower division general education, including the 33-hour general education transfer component consisting of communications (9 hours), humanities (6 hours), social/behavioral sciences (9 hours), natural sciences (6 hours), and mathematics (3 hours). AA and AS transfer degrees offered by universities must meet the sending institution's lower division general education requirements for the baccalaureate degree. AA and AS transfer degrees offered by University of Kentucky community colleges must contain, in addition to the 33-hour general education transfer component, at least three additional hours in the natural sciences or in mathematics at a level higher than college algebra, and at least nine additional hours in the categories included in the general education transfer component. The Associate in Science transfer degree must also include at least one natural science course with a laboratory experience. Students transferring to the University of Kentucky are advised that they must meet the University of Kentucky foreign language requirement which can be met through two years of foreign language in high school or by

taking six hours of foreign language in college in addition to the 33-hour general education transfer component. Depending on the grading policy of the receiving institution, courses in which a “D” grade is earned at the sending institution may need to be retaken at the receiving institution.

(2) Students completing 60 or more hours without earning an associate degree should be accorded the same status as students completing an AA or AS transfer program provided the same conditions are met: the 60 or more hours include 48 hours of lower division general education, the 33-hour general education transfer component (as specified above) is incorporated into the general education coursework, and a 2.0 GPA overall is earned for the hours attempted. For universities, the 48 hours of general education must meet the sending institution’s lower division general education requirements for the baccalaureate degree. For University of Kentucky community colleges, the 48 hours of general education must be consistent with the distribution for approved AA/AS transfer degrees. Students transferring to the University of Kentucky must also meet the foreign language requirement as specified above. Depending on the grading policy of the receiving institution, courses in which a “1)” grade is earned at the sending institution may need to be retaken at the receiving institution.

(3) Recognition of the integrity and validity of the general education program at each sending institution results in acceptance of a general education program which is comparable, but not identical, to the general education program at the receiving institution.

(4) AA/ AS transfer programs with 48 hours of institution-wide lower division general education will serve as the starting point

in developing transfer programs for specific majors which are mentioned in the *SJR 36 Final Report*.

(5) Since general education requirements differ in magnitude among the institutions, accepting 48 hours of transfer work in fulfillment of institution-wide lower division general education requirements may create difficulties in completing specific programs of study. If a receiving institution’s lower division general education program exceeds 48 hours, acceptance of 48 hours in place of this higher number would create a gap in a student’s program of study in that additional hours must be taken to acquire the total hours required for graduation. Therefore, the receiving institution may require general education courses in addition to the 48 hours transferred. An assessment of individual courses may be necessary to determine which general education requirements have been fulfilled and which, if any, remain to be completed at the receiving institution. Likewise, if any institution requires less than 48 hours of lower division general education, acceptance of 48 hours of general education will likely create a surplus of total hours when all other requirements are completed unless the surplus general education hours are used as electives.

Transfer of General Education Component for Non-Degreed Students

(1) The general education transfer component stresses the commonality of some general education requirements among universities for the baccalaureate degree, but provides for flexibility so that the remaining portion of an institution’s general education program can be accommodated. Consequently, the general education transfer component includes fewer lower division credit hours than are typically required at any university for a baccalaureate degree, thereby providing

the flexibility for receiving institutions to include those requirements which complete their general education programs and which make their general education programs distinctive.

- (2) The common aspects of institution-wide lower division general education requirements have been organized into five categories with the number of hours to be completed in each category shown in parentheses: Communication (9 hours), Humanities (6 hours), Social/Behavioral Sciences (9 hours), Natural Sciences (6 hours), and Mathematics (3 hours) for a total of 33 hours. The courses which meet the requirements in each of these categories are those designated by the sending institution to fulfill its institution-wide lower division general education requirements. The criteria for each category are contained in Appendix I.
- (3) The general education transfer component should be supplemented by an institutional commitment that, to the extent possible, the transfer of any remaining credit hours beyond the general education transfer component to the receiving institution will be treated as liberally as possible to maximize the transferability of credit toward meeting degree requirements.
- (4) Students must attain an overall grade point average of 2.0 (4.0 scale). Depending on the grading policy of the receiving institution, courses in which a "D" grade is earned at the sending institution may need to be retaken at the receiving institution.
- (5) Completion of the 33-hour general education transfer component, or completion of any of its categories in accordance with the criteria for the category, will guarantee that courses in the category will be counted as a block toward meeting institution-wide lower division general education requirements at the receiving institution. That is, the nine hours

(6 written, 3 oral) taken to complete the communications category will not be evaluated on a course-by-course basis but will be accepted as a block of nine hours in meeting the receiving institution's communications requirement. However, if the receiving institution requires more than nine hours in communications, it may require non-degreed transfers and those with less than 60 hours to take additional hours in communications. An assessment of individual courses may be necessary to determine which general education requirements remain to be completed at the receiving institution.

Institutional Responsibility

- (1) Advising at both sending and receiving institutions and an interinstitutional network are essential to the successful implementation of this transfer policy. Academic advisors and other institutional staff concerned with transfer should enforce and strengthen, if necessary, policies and procedures, and should establish an interinstitutional communications link, e.g., through electronic mail, for easier communication among institutional staff addressing similar issues.
- (2) The general education transfer policy and the courses which meet general education requirements should be easily accessible to students. The transfer policy should be included in each institution's catalog for easy reference.
- (3) The general education transfer policy and the courses designated for completion of general education requirements should be reviewed by a committee of the Council on Higher Education and institutional representatives no later than January 1996. Subsequent reviews should be scheduled on a regular basis.

Student Responsibility and Access to Transfer Information

- (1) Students are encouraged to complete their lower division general education requirements during the first two years of study.
- (2) Students who transfer without an associate degree must request a general education audit from the sending institution so that the sending institution can verify which lower division general education requirements have been met.
- (3) Since the provisions of this policy address only institution-wide lower division general education requirements, students are advised to be aware of the general education requirements of the college or school within the university and the general education requirements of the degree program to which they plan to transfer.

Appeals Process

A student appeals process will be developed as part of the implementation process. At a minimum, it will provide for institutional review of transfer decisions governed by institutional policies and the statewide General Education Transfer Policy. A second state-level review will be available for transfer decisions governed by the statewide General Education Transfer Policy.

Designation of Courses Meeting General Education Requirements

In order to identify courses which meet the general education requirements at the sending institution, courses must be designated for each of the general education transfer categories by each institution. These designations must be available to students and academic advisors at the sending institution for effective transfer program planning. Further, the general education category designations for individual courses must also be available to receiving institutions for accurate transcript evaluation. Eventually, category designations may be printed on the student's transcript; however, since this is not possible at this time, the Council will modify its Course Inventory to include general education category designations. Institutions will be responsible for providing general education category designations and updates as part of the Council's regular data reporting process no later than spring 1995. Council staff will distribute the general education transfer category designations to the Director of Admissions at each institution for each fall and spring semester.

General Education Transfer Implementation Procedures and Timeframe

A General Education Transfer Implementation Committee will be designated by university presidents. The committee will be responsible for assisting Council staff in developing procedures to facilitate the implementation of the policy on each campus and committee members will serve as resource persons on their campuses.

GENERAL EDUCATION TRANSFER POLICY IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

Sept. 1 - Nov. 15, 1994

Institutional review of Committee Report and proposed Council policy

April 1995

Council action on General Education Transfer Policy

September 1994

Institutions submit general education course codes

April - May 1995

First meeting of General Education Transfer Implementation Committee

November 1994

CHE staff provides list of general education course codes to all Admissions Offices

April - September 1995

Institutions submit Associate of Arts and Associate of Science programs for approval as transfer programs (effective for spring 1996 transfers)

November 16, 1994

Institutional responses received at Council

Fall 1995

Institutions evaluate transcripts using General Education Transfer Policy

December 9, 1994

General Education Committee meets to address institutional comments

Spring 1996

General Education Transfer Policy becomes effective for transfer students

January 1995

Institutions submit general education course codes

January 1997

Schedule. review of General Education Transfer Policy and its implementation

March 1995

CHE staff provides final list of general education course codes to all Admissions Offices

March 1995

Presidents nominate university personnel to serve on implementation committee

APPENDIX 1 GENERAL EDUCATION TRANSFER COMPONENT

The general education transfer component consists of five categories and totals 33 credit hours.

Communications – 9

Written Communications - 6

Oral Communications - 3

Humanities - 6

The discipline(s) represented in this category must be different from those in Behavioral/ Social Sciences.

Courses may be chosen from, but not necessarily limited to, the following:

Fine Arts (excluding studio and performance)

Philosophy

Literature

History

Foreign Language (same language)

Cross-Cultural

Inter/Multi-disciplinary

Behavioral/Social Sciences .9.

At least two disciplines must be represented and must be different from those in Humanities. Students transferring to UK must include a cross-cultural course in this category.

Courses may be chosen from, but not necessarily limited to, the following:

Psychology

Sociology

Economics

History

Anthropology

Geography

Political Science

Cross-Cultural

Inter/Multi-disciplinary

Natural Sciences – 6

Courses may be chosen from, but not necessarily limited to, the following disciplines:

Biology

Chemistry

Physics

Astronomy

Geology

Physical Science

Mathematics - 3

Minimum: college algebra (For individuals not completing an AA/AS degree or 60 or more qualifying hours, acceptance of college algebra at NKU will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.)

